

The Church Guardian

— EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR: —

L. H. DAVIDSON, D.C.L., MONTREAL.

— ASSOCIATE EDITORS: —

REV. H. W. NYE, M.A., Rector, Bedford, P.Q. REV. EDWYN S. W. PENTREATH, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Address Correspondence and Communications to the Editor, P.O. Box 504. Exchanges to P.O. Box 1950. For Business announcements see page 14.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

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CALENDAR FOR DECEMBER.

- Dec. 6th—Second Sunday in Advent.
 " 13th—Third Sunday in Advent.
 " 18th } EMBER DAYS.
 " 18th }
 " 19th }
 " 20th—Fourth Sunday in Advent.
 " 21st—St. Thomas A. & M.
 " 25th—CHRISTMAS.
 " 26th—St. Stephen's—First M.
 " 27th—St. John—Ap. & E.
 " 28th—First Sunday after Christmas.
 " 28th—The Innocents' Day.

ADVENT PASTORAL OF THE BISHOP OF MAINE.

The solemn season of Advent upon which we have now entered has the same relation to the Christmas festival as the season of Lent to the Easter festival. The meditations and spiritual exercises to which it calls us are designed to enable us to celebrate the Nativity of the Saviour of men with the joy of those who both realize their need of a Saviour, and recognize in Jesus one whom God hath provided to be their Saviour. Christmas brings a certain gladness to all hearts; and it exercises a gracious influence even upon those who give little heed to its real significance. It loosens the bonds of selfishness and incites to deeds of kindness, and diffuses peace and good-will even where the source of its peculiar power is quite unrecognized, and the "unspeakable gift" from God, which it commemorates, wholly ignored. But only those who believe in the reality of that gift, and appreciate its value, know the true Christmas joy; and, therefore, the Church seeks, during this holy season, to quicken anew our faith in Christ, and especially to renew in us the sense of our helpless and hopeless condition apart from Him. She would also have us seriously consider that we may not claim the incarnate Son of God as our personal Saviour, unless we are serving Him as our Master, and are striving to approve ourselves unto Him as our Judge. She bids us to try and examine ourselves, to repent us of our sins and shortcomings, to rouse ourselves to greater watchfulness and more zealous labors; that our rejoicing at the great festival may be with a more reasonable confidence and a fuller assurance of faith. Let us heed Her loving voice, and be guided by Her wisdom, making ready the way of the Lord in our hearts and lives: and He Himself shall become "the

portion of our inheritance and of our cup," dwelling within us, a perennial well-spring of joy and peace.—*The North East.*

SPECIAL MISSION SERVICES.

These have become a recognized and accepted means of carrying on the work of the Church; and as is well known have been in England signally blessed of God. The great Advent Mission so long and so thoroughly prepared for in New York has been most auspiciously opened and now is in full operation. Our earnest prayer is that it may be effectual "in turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just." Several eminent English Missioners have been secured—amongst them the Rev. Dr. Pigou, Vicar of Halifax, England, and Chaplain in ordinary to the Queen, and the Rev. W. H. Aitken. We also notice that in various other cities of the United States like services are being or have been inaugurated, and the thought has suggested itself to us that it would be well if the Canadian Church would follow suit, and secure the services of some of these experienced and able Missioners for conducting Missions in the chief cities of the Dominion. Could not a General Committee for the Ecclesiastical Province be formed at once to carry out such services with the concurrence of each diocesan? The *Church Press*, of New York, thus speaks of the expectant attitude and active life of the Church in the United States:—

"We are on the eve of a glorious revival in the Church. It is, indeed, already dawning. The "showers of blessing" are now coming down. In almost every part of the Church there is a revived feeling, an invigorated faith, an earnest expectancy, a fulness of communion and joy almost unparalleled in the history of the Church. These "mission" services are only the outcome of the revival which has set in. They are in part the results of the Spirit's baptism and power; and so again, rightly used, they will become means for obtaining a still richer baptism of the Holy Ghost. Are not the "last days" near at hand? Has not the "set time" to favor Zion come? Is not God even now waiting to be gracious? And shall not we, as a great united Church, come up to the "help of the Lord, the help of the Lord against the mighty?" "Save now, we beseech Thee, O Lord; O Lord we beseech Thee send now prosperity!"

May not the Church in Canada participate in this outpouring of the Spirit by the use of like means? We know mission services have been held in several places, but not, we believe, generally, and, perhaps, not as effectually as might be done if such experienced leaders as those above mentioned could be and were obtained. We would very much like to see a movement towards this end, made in Montreal.

PROFOUNDER REGARD FOR THE SACRED SCRIPTURES.

(From *The Church*.)

There are not a few persons who have "evolutionized" themselves out of the reverent use of the Sacred Scriptures. They are scarcely conscious of the way in which the change has taken place in them. They simply know that they have lived in a different atmosphere, and they have gradually come under its influence and power; criticisms which once shocked them, they now accept, finding no other fault with them than this,

that they are not thorough enough. And now their condition is the very opposite to the state of mind possessed by the Psalmist when he cried out, "Lord, what love have I unto Thy law! All the day long is my study in it. O, how sweet are Thy words unto my throat, yea, sweeter than honey unto my mouth!"

It seems to the writer that the force of the attack upon the Bible, from the side of the "higher criticism," has spent itself. In that attack, very little has been brought out and established that is new, and most of the arguments advanced have not stood the test of a still higher criticism to which they have been subjected. The Bible is a book, not to be worshipped, but to be reverently studied; criticism is not to be deprecated, but the character of that venerable book is so high, and its beneficent influence so mighty and constant, that there is little excuse for the scholar who attacks it on grounds that are unhistoric and that do not commend themselves to the common sense of mankind.

One year ago we illustrated "the power and authority" of the Bible from the writings of two scholars, with whose general teachings we do not agree. But the statements of Matthew Arnold in respect to the Bible as the "teacher of righteousness" or "inspirer of conduct which is more than three-fourths of human life," and the teaching of Dr. Pusey that "the authority of the Church depends upon Holy Scripture," had deeply impressed us, and we felt that they would do good to our readers, as they had done good to ourselves. We pursue the same course this year, and we call attention to a book lately reviewed in our columns, to wit, "A Layman's Study of the English Bible," by Professor Francis Bowen, LL.D., of Harvard College. Professor Bowen indulges in pretty free criticism, but this increases the weight of his commendatory words.

We quote first his statement as to the value of the Bible as an "English classic," illustrated by its influence in forming the style of John Ruskin.

"John Ruskin is certainly the greatest master that the present century has produced of pure, idiomatic, vigorous and eloquent English prose; and as the first volume of his 'Modern Painters,' perhaps his best work, appeared over forty years ago, when he was a recent 'graduate of Oxford,' his style was perfectly formed while he was yet a young man. How was it formed. In one of his latest writings he has told us that in his childhood, as part of his home education, his mother required him to commit to memory, and repeat to her, passages from the Bible. A similar custom, as some of us old men know, prevailed here in New England over half a century ago, and I hope that in some families it lingers still. Ruskin gives us the exact list, twenty-six in number, of the Psalms and chapters he thus learned by heart; and as the selection was, in the main, an excellent one, we need not seek further for the secret of his admirable diction and perfect command of English phraseology. In his list are contained two chapters from the Pentateuch; the 15th and 20th from Exodus; eight of the Psalms, among which are the 90th, the 119th and the 139th; the 5th, 6th and 7th of Matthew, being the whole Sermon on the Mount, and others."

The Bible as a Text Book of Political Science.

With Prof. Bowen the Bible is something more than a book of noble and lofty style. For he says:—

"For the mere student of political science, of the origin of government, of the theory of legislation, and of the determining causes of national character, I know of no study more instructive and fruitful than that of the history, the institutions and the laws of the Hebrew people."